

**FIATT Meeting Summary**  
**Wednesday, April 21, 2004**  
**South Florida Water Management District**  
**3301 Gun Club Road**  
**West Palm Beach, Florida 33406**

**Attendance:**

Bob Doren – DOI (phone)  
Amy Ferriter - SFWMD  
John Galvez - FWS  
Scott Hardin - FWC  
Tom Jackson - NOAA  
Rafaela Monchek - DOI

Art Roybal – FWS, SFFO (Co-chair)  
Don Schmitz – FDEP (Co-chair)  
Skip Snow – NPS, ENP  
Bill Thomas- FWS, Loxahatchee NWR  
Sonya Thompson – Miami-Dade County(phone)  
Kristi Yanchis – FWS, SFFO

**Minutes:**

The minutes were approved without changes.

**Agenda Changes:**

Skip's presentation was moved to 2:30p.m.

**Topics for Future Bob Doren Presentation to the Working Group:**

This presentation will take place at the July Working Group meeting.

Bob will be requesting the Working Group (WG) add a new subgoal to the Strategic Plan: Subgoal, 2-C Control of invasive exotic animals. Bob needs any read ahead materials for the WG by May 21<sup>st</sup>.

Bob will also be updating the WG on the ecosystem.org site and the Recon Report. He will include discussing the importance of FIATT, and supervisors on the WG allowing their staff to participate. A list of FIATT members will be put together by Art and Don that will be provided to the WG.

Skip will be writing a section on invasive animals for inclusion in the Recon-style report Bob is putting together for the Corps. This will help encourage more funding for exotics projects.

Bob will be talking to Greg May about having someone put up a website for FIATT.

**Draft Standard Operating Procedures:**

Don distributed a draft of the operating procedures, with the changes from the last meeting in red, and Bob's corrections in amber.

The team had the following comments and changes:

- "sub-working group" in page 1, line 6 was changed to "task team"
- page 1, line 12 was changed from "priorities, agencies" to "support agencies by facilitating cooperative...."
- a period was added after Working Group on page 1, line 15, and the next sentence now begins, "The Task Team's interests..."
- "federal, state, and local agency/institution" was removed from page 1, lines 29-30
- page 1, lines 30, 32 and page 3, line 16, 27, 30: "the" was removed from before FIATT
- "tribal" will be added every time the list "federal, state and local" is written
- on page 1, line 32 and page 2, line 7, an "s" was added to make "Chair" plural
- page 2, line 11: "Chair or Vice-Chair" was changed to say "Chairs"

- a period was added to divide the sentence in page 2, lines 15 – 17 after the word “attend” and before “The”
- Don will remove a few “FIATT”s from the FIATT Meetings paragraph
- FIATT will try to arrange to have their meetings on consecutive days with NEWTT, and will attempt to have a calendar of dates for 1 calendar year at a time
- Quorum and Voting Procedures paragraph were deleted
- page 3, line 14, 15, 16 and 17 and page 4, line 6 will say “Co-chairs”
- FIATT Vice-Chair paragraph was deleted
- page 4, line 13, “Group” will be added after “Working”
- Amending the SOP paragraph will be modified to say changes will be made by consensus

### **Chair Consensus:**

FIATT will have 2 Co-Chairs, Art Roybal and Don Schmitz.

### **Update of Goodyear (2000) Report: Individual Section Team Assignments**

Suggestions:

- Each team member identify the gaps in new species and issues to cover changes since 1996.
- Focus on the animals that have the potential to degrade the natural system
- List of candidates for where there are research needs
- Prioritize species
- List what is there, whether it is a threat or not; Tom has already completed the reptile section; invertebrates will be the largest challenge
- Send information out to the experts when the team is finished compiling the missing information

Don will send electronic copies with line numbers, a table of contents and guidelines for comments out to the team. Members will review this and determine the gaps for incorporation into a draft. Changes, additions and subtractions should be sent to Don, including experts and comprehensive lists when available. There will be an understanding that comprehensive lists may not be available for every taxa.

The team requested someone from USGS be involved in FIATT.

After this report, the goal would be to obtain research funding for the species that can have significant impacts on the restoration process.

### **Individual Agency Roundtable/Updates:**

Scott offered to do a risk assessment, but only heard from the USDA. ISWG Is currently working on creating a method for risk assessment. He warned that risk is subjective. He is hoping to form a stakeholder group to make determinations on risk classification.

### **Presentation - Disposable Pets, Unwanted Giants: Pythons in Everglades National Park, *Skip Snow, ENP***

The first park records show large snakes appearing in the Everglades in the 1970s, and the numbers have been increasing ever since. A year ago many photographs were taken when an alligator and a python fought on the Anhinga Trail. Burmese pythons are from Southeast Asia. They average 12’ – 13’, but can reach over 20’.

Occasionally, Ball and Reticulated pythons and Common Boa constrictors are seen in the park, but the majority are Burmese pythons. In 2002-2003, many more snakes have been seen near the entrance from people disposing of their pets. The snakes are now reproducing in the park, all three size-classes are being found.

Skip is currently working with Ken Rice from the USGS to better track the snakes. 46 were moved last year, the park is presently removing one a week.

Burmese pythons are a product of the pet trade. They are bred by the hundreds, with hatchlings being sold for as little as \$20. A 20" baby can be a 6' juvenile within a year. They are increasingly being abandoned at vets offices and animal shelters or are simply turned loose.

Burmese pythons are generalists in their diet, habitat use and behavior. They lay eggs in 8 – 108 egg clutches, and can live for about 25 years. They can survive long periods of time without eating. They are considered invasive in other places as well.

Almost 4 million households have a pet reptile or amphibian. 22% of which are snakes. The estimated 1996 US pet snake population was 900,000.

Burmese pythons compete with native animals for prey and critical/limited habitat. They spread diseases, such as IBD to natives and are a threat to visitor's safety.

To help control this problem, the public must be informed of their danger, including the distribution of informational material. Methods of capturing, restraining and disposing are being investigated, including the use of traps and snake finding dogs. And data is being collected on the animals, including tracking them to determine habits.

In November, the Park and the SFWMD L-67 maintenance crew captured 8 large, adult Burmese Pythons that inhabited the levee. One had 41 eggs.

To report a python, call the Python Hotline at 305-242-7827 or 305-815-2080 and provide the location of the python. Do not handle the pythons. The largest safety hazard they pose is stretching across the park road and causing accidents.

**Next Meeting:**

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for September, based on responses on the Goodyear report to Don.